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# PROCEEDINGS AND PAPERS

OF

## THE KILKENNY AND SOUTH-EAST OF IRELAND

### ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY,

FOR THE YEAR 1859.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, held in the Assembly Rooms, Kilkenny, on Wednesday, January 5th, 1859,

W. JACKSON DOUGLAS, Esq., in the Chair.

The following new Members were elected :—

Stephen Edward De Vere, Esq., M. P., Monair, Foynes: proposed by the Rev. R. J. Gabbett.

Richard Musgrave, Esq., D. L., J. P., Tourin, Cappoquin; P. MacDowell, Esq., R. A., 74A, Cavendish-square, London; Francis N. Lett, Esq., Dunaghy Glebe, Clough, Belfast; Patrick Duffy, Esq., F. C. S., Patrick-street, Kilkenny; and Mr. Edward Callanan, Victoria Hotel, Kilkenny: proposed by the Rev. J. Graves.

Hercules St. George, Esq., J. P., Balief, Johnstown: proposed by Mr. Daniel M'Evoy.

The Rev. William Irwin, 83, Marlborough-street, Dublin; and Rev. Walter Murphy, 83, Marlborough-street, Dublin: proposed by the Rev. Paul Smithwick, P. P.

Surgeon William Peterson Bernard, Ballintemple, county of Cork: proposed by Nicholas Peterson, Esq.

The Rev. James Freke, B. A., Durrow Glebe, Carrigbue, Bantry, county of Cork: proposed by the Rev. John Kingston.

The Rev. John Butler, P. P., Kilcooly, Thurles: proposed by J. R. Butler, Esq.

William A. Rushton, Esq., M. A., Professor of English History and Literature, Queen's College, Cork: proposed by R. R. Brash, Esq.

Jeremiah Merrick, Esq., 83, North Main-street, Youghal: proposed by the Rev. Samuel Hayman.

The following Report of the Committee, for the year 1858, was read by the Honorary Secretary:—

The commencement of the *Eleventh* Session of the Society must afford subject of congratulation to all its friends, especially as the work of the last year affords a proof that the sterling ore of historic matter is as abundant as ever, and that there are many true and stalwart workmen amongst the Members of the Association who do not grudge their toil in the cause of Irish Archaeology. The Journal of the Society for the year 1858 is in the hands of Members up to its September Number. The concluding part is all in type, and shall shortly be published. A further portion of the “Annuary” is also in type, and shall soon be issued. It will contain a full account of the social state of the county of Kilkenny in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII., as placed on record by the formal Presentments, made to a Royal Commission, by the gentry, corporations, and commons of the county and city. These Presentments being in continuation of those of Wexford, already published, and to be followed by similar documents from the other south-eastern counties of Ireland, will, when completed, form a most important volume, throwing a broad light on the social condition of the district at a most interesting period. Your Committee trust that more ample support than has been hitherto afforded will enable the Society to complete this desirable contribution to Irish history.

The strength of the Society has been fully maintained by the election of *ninety* new Members during the year.

Your Committee regret that the dilatoriness of many Members, with regard to the payment of their subscriptions, has caused the accounts for 1857 to exhibit a balance against the Society. This in many cases, no doubt, arose from carelessness or forgetfulness; but it is not the less to be deplored, and a continuance of the evil must eventually injure the usefulness of the Society. The custom hitherto has been to allow Members to run two years in arrear before their names are removed from the Society's books. Your Committee recommend that more stringent measures should for the future be taken, and that the names of all Members in arrear on the 31st of December in each year be at once removed from the Publishers' list,—with the understanding that they shall be replaced on payment of all arrears, together with a small fine, to defray the postage of applications.

Your Committee, fully agreeing with the unanimous resolution of regret for the death of Dr. Robert Cane, adopted at the September Meeting, cannot avoid expressing their sense of the great loss inflicted on the Society by his untimely removal from amongst us. His exertions in the cause of Irish Archaeology were, as far as the engagements of a busy professional life allowed, most untiring and judicious; and they feel that his place as Treasurer and ex-officio Member of the Committee of this Society cannot be easily filled.

The Report was unanimously adopted, and ordered to be printed; and all Members one year and upwards in arrear ordered to be removed from the Publishers' list for the issue of the “Journal.”

On the motion of Patrick Aylward, Esq., the Committee and Officers for the year 1859 were elected, as follows:—

PRESIDENT :

THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF OSSORY.

VICE-PRESIDENTS :

THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR OF KILKENNY.  
THE HIGH SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY OF KILKENNY.  
THE HIGH SHERIFF OF THE CITY OF KILKENNY.

TREASURER :

REV. JAMES GRAVES, A. B.

HONORARY SECRETARIES :

REV. JAMES GRAVES, A. B.  
JOHN G. AUGUSTUS PRIM.

COMMITTEE :

JAMES S. BLAKE, Esq., J. P., Barrister-at-Law.  
REV. JOHN BROWNE, LL. D.  
SAMSON CARTER, Esq., C. E., M. R. I. A.  
BARRY DELANY, Esq., M.D.  
REV. LUKE FOWLER, A. M.  
JOHN JAMES, Esq., L. R. C. S. I.  
THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF LEIGHLIN.  
REV. PHILIP MOORE, R. C. C.  
MATTHEW O'DONNELL, Esq., Barrister-at-Law.  
REV. JOHN O'HANLON, R. C. C.  
JAMES G. ROBERTSON, Esq., Architect.  
JOHN WINDELE, Esq.

Mr. J. G. Robertson and Mr. P. Aylward were elected Auditors of the accounts for the year 1858.

The following presentations were received, and thanks voted to the donors:—

By the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne: “Archæologia Æliana,” new series, parts 1–11, inclusive.

By the Publisher: “The Dublin Builder,” No. 1.

By the Royal Dublin Society: their “Journal,” Nos. 9–11, inclusive.

By the Cambrian Archæological Association: “Archæologia Cambrensis,” No. 16, and Supplement to Vol. IV.

By the Publisher: “The Gentleman’s Magazine,” December, 1858.

By the Architectural, Archæological, and Historic Society for the County, City, and Neighbourhood of Chester: their "Journal," part 5.

By Robert Mac Adam, Esq.: "The Ulster Journal of Archæology," No. 24.

By the Cambrian Institute: "The Cambrian Journal," second series, No. 3.

By Alfred John Dunkin, Esq.: "The Archæological Mine," parts 40 and 41.

By the Publisher: "The Builder," Nos. 22-29, inclusive.

By Dr. Keating: a richly ornamented candlestick, cast in lead, apparently French work of the period of Louis XIV. It was found on the site of the old building formerly called "Callan Castle," and sometimes "the Palace,"—the seat of the Candler family, the death of the last of whom (Admiral Count Candler, of the Russian service) was announced within the last few years in the public press, wherein he was described as of "Callan Castle, Ireland."

Coins presented:—By Mr. John Dunne: a St. Patrick's farthing, and two other coins. By Mr. John Carroll: a Dublin halfpenny token. By Mr. T. May: a shilling of William III. By the Rev. John Kingston: a silver penny of Edward I., one of a find of eighty discovered at Shahanaleera, three miles from Ballydehob, county of Cork. By John L. Conn, Esq.: a Waterford token, dug up on his property in that county: *Ob., JOHN T . . . ; Rev., CITY OF WATERFORD, 1<sup>o</sup>, 1657.*

John Rowe, Esq., Ballycross, county of Wexford, sent for exhibition a massive plain gold ring, found in the year 1844, in the townland of Ballyhorty, barony of Bargy, county of Wexford. It was a signet ring; the device was a shield bearing a ragged staff, between two swords erect, but without any inscription or initials. The workmanship was of about the middle of the seventeenth century. The armorial bearings, probably foreign, were well engraved.

Mrs. Power, Waterford, sent for exhibition, through her nephew, J. A. Blake, Esq., M. P., a bronze signet ring, found in the course of excavations at the Court House, Waterford, which was the site of one of the ancient abbeys of that city. The workmen having uncovered a small vault, or grave of masonry, discovered the remains of an ecclesiastic in full vestments. The figure, when first uncovered, seemed quite perfect, but shortly after being exposed to the action of the air, it had fallen into dust. On the finger this ring had been found. It was extremely rude in its workmanship; the device was a shield, bearing a saltier between four indistinctly marked charges, three of which (those on the fess and base points) appeared to be fleurs-de-lis.

The Rev. James Graves exhibited a magnificent ancient Irish

fibula of extraordinary size and rare type, which had been discovered in the course of the summer. It was found, he said, by a labourer in the parish of Killamory, county of Kilkenny, and evidently had not been deposited in the earth in connexion with any burial, as it rested, without being enclosed in any cist, or connected with any other remains, on the yellow-clay subsoil beneath the vegetable mould of the field. For size, beauty of ornamentation, and bold, yet elegant design, this brooch was, perhaps, the finest of the rare class to which it belonged. The material was white metal, parcel-gilt on the ornamental portions. It was much tarnished from oxidation. It was irregularly circular, the diameters being  $4\frac{1}{2}$  by  $5\frac{5}{16}$  inches. The lower, or ornamental portion, was crescent-shaped and flat, measuring  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches across its broadest part. The annular portion was  $\frac{7}{16}$ ths of an inch in thickness. The flat, or lower part, was bordered by four monstrous couchant animals, such as are often figured in ancient Irish monuments and sculpture; of these, the two which form the external border had birds' beaks. The fibula was pseudo-penannular, the artist having the type so designated in his mind's eye, but allowing the ends to be connected by two bosses, embraced by the jaws of the monsters just described, and by a band, with interlaced ornament, leaving two perforations across the broadest part of the crescent. On each side were two sunk, or panelled ornaments, measuring respectively  $\frac{9}{16}$ ths and  $\frac{10}{16}$ ths of an inch square, and set lozenge-wise, from the sides of which the metal was slightly bevelled off in four facets. These depressions were filled up with delicate filigree-work in gold wire, or silver wire heavily gilt. The filigree ornaments consisted of a boss in the centre, surrounded by eight small coiled knobs within a circle of twisted wire, outside of which was also a square of twisted wire, with coiled knobs in the angles. Where the ring joined into the crescent-portion of the fibula were two large bosses set with glass, the latter inlaid with white metal. The bosses measured  $\frac{12}{16}$ ths of an inch in diameter, and projected  $\frac{7}{16}$ ths of an inch. On the back, the ring of the fibula ended in two monsters' heads in low relief; and on the flattened portion were two irregularly formed rectangular ornaments in low relief, each bearing, within a border ornamented by dots, a monster having a strong resemblance to those which are to be found in such numbers in the illuminations of the "Book of Kells." At the base of the crescent was a small but strong loop, probably serving to hold some contrivance to fasten the pin, which was wanting in the security attaching to the pins of penannular brooches. The pin was of very unusual form: it measured 12 inches from head to point; the head was flat and rectangular, the breadth at top  $\frac{12}{16}$ ths of an inch, at bottom  $\frac{10}{16}$ ths of an inch, and the height  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches. It was attached to the fibula, at the back, by a strong loop. This loop was disengaged at its lower

end, seemingly to allow of its being bent back to remove the pin from the fibula at pleasure. In a socket, which was of one piece with the head, and finished with a beaded ornament, was fixed, by two rivets, an acus,  $10\frac{1}{4}$  inches long. Where joined to the head, the acus was  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of an inch thick; in the middle it swelled out to a diameter of  $\frac{5}{16}$ ths of an inch, and tapered to a blunt point. The metal of the acus seemed to consist of a core of pewter, covered with white metal. The head of the pin was ornamented by a border, consisting of two monsters, with heads at each extremity, the jaws embracing bosses. At the insertion of the acus was a boss set with glass, the latter inlaid with white metal. In the centre was a sunk panel, with filigree-work, similar to those on the fibula; it was  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch square, and set lozenge-wise, the metal bevelled off in four facets from its sides. The fibula weighed 11 oz. 3 dwts., and the pin 4 oz. 9 dwts, troy weight. The acus of the fibula had been broken by the spade of the finder. The annexed Plates (drawn and engraved on wood by Mr. Oldham) gave a faithful representation of this most valuable antique. He should add that on the back of the fibula there was incised an Irish inscription, apparently to the following effect:—  
Op ap Ochipmac—“A prayer for O’Chirmac.” These characters were inscribed with a pointed tool or graver, and, although partially concealed by oxidation, showed quite clear and sharp when examined by the aid of a magnifying-glass, with the exception of the last three letters, the back of the brooch being there much filed or scratched. Subjoined is a fac-simile, the indistinct portions

Oyvadurmac

being dotted. Both the character of the letters and the formula of the inscription would be seen to be as old, at all events, as the year 1050, and the occurrence of the legend proved also that the brooch was in the possession of some person *after* the use of hereditary surnames became prevalent in Ireland,—thus establishing the fact that the brooch was *in use* about the middle of the eleventh century. But this was not the most interesting point connected with the legend. Dr. Petrie (“Inquiry into the Origin, &c., of the Round Towers,” pp. 280–82), had proved that the beautiful and highly ornamented doorway of the parish church of Achad-ur or Freshford, in the north of the county of Kilkenny, must have belonged to the period alluded to, from the fact of its bearing two ancient inscriptions running round the inner arch, both containing patronymics. One of these legends commemorated the names of the chieftain and his wife by whose munificence the sacred structure was erected. Now, it was

<sup>1</sup> This interesting fact was discovered by Mr. Clibborn, Curator of the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, whilst examining the antique with a magnifying-glass.



THE KILKENNY BROOCH.

Front View.

Largest Diameters of Original, 5 3-16ths, and 4 1/2 inches.



THE KILKENNY BROOCH.

Back View.

Showing incised Inscription.

a most important fact that the same name occurred on the Kilkenny brooch also. *MATHGMÁIN U CHIARMEIC* caused the church to be built, and *OCHIRMGAC* seemed to be the name on the brooch—both identical with the modern form Keerwick, a surname still common amongst the peasantry near Freshford, and also in other parts of the county of Kilkenny under the form Kirby, and the patronymic of one of the Leinster clans descended from Fergus Luascan, son of Cathair More, monarch of Ireland in the second century (“Book of Lecan,” fol. 96 *b*). Both the church and the brooch were excellent specimens of Irish art, and Kilkenny might be proud of them. He (Mr. Graves) thought it extremely probable that the workmanship of the latter might be assigned to the same period as the architecture of the church; and he hoped it was not going very far into the realms of conjecture to suppose that this brooch might have secured the mantle of the chieftain, Mahon O’Keerwick, when he stood by and saw Moholmoc O’Cencuain carving the quaint monsters which, as on the brooch, served as ornaments to the western portal of the church. It should not be concealed, however, that the legend on the brooch might have been *graved* on the metal of which it was composed long subsequently to the actual period of the manufacture of the antique; or that it might be intended to commemorate the name, not of the owner, but of the maker. In any case he believed the occurrence of such a record was unique. Mr. Graves stated that he trusted this fibula would ultimately be secured for the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy. The pattern had already been “registered” for reproduction by a Dublin jeweller, and by his (Mr. Graves’s) suggestion had been named the “Kilkenny Brooch.”

The following letter, addressed by Mr. Edward Clibborn, Curator of the Royal Irish Academy’s Museum, to the Rev. James Graves, with reference to the antique in question, was then read:—

“24th December, 1858.

“DEAR SIR,—In reply to your query as to the material composing the exterior of the large brooch in your hands, I beg to say that it has all the external characters of the substance which composes the surface as well as the substance of several other brooches in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy.

“At first sight these brooches appear from their colour to be made of silver; they are generally found quite or nearly bright; while, on the contrary, white silver things are generally discovered in the earth nearly black in colour, and they often find their way to Dublin with scrap metal, as old copper or dirty brass, so very unlike are they to modern silver in colour and condition.

“An experienced eye will detect a difference in the surface of brooches, &c., made of this metal or alloy, and of silver, though the latter may be clean, or nearly clear of oxidation; indeed, most of the antiques made

of silver have a dull, leaden, *dusty-bluish* tint, as if they were made of an alloy of silver and lead. An exception should, however, be made in favour of the colour of those silver brooches with the arbutus berry or prickly nobs, such as the brooch in the Academy's collection, procured from the neighbourhood of Kilkenny, through the instrumentality of Mr. Bindon, and the gigantic top knob of the acus or pin of another brooch, which yourself secured for this Museum, and which was also found in your neighbourhood; so that Kilkenny has become rather famous of late for discovery in this brooch department of Irish archaeology.

"I find from Mr. Henry Johnson, of Dublin, who has had great experience in the manufacture of modern Irish ornaments of antique fashion, and who has carefully examined the composition of most of the ornamental antique brooches in this Museum, so far as superficial tests would enable him, that the surface metal of the more highly ornamented brooches found in Ireland is not silver, but a kind of brass. He would call it '*white brass*,' considering it an alloy of copper and tin, very nearly related in composition to the speculum metal used by Lord Rosse and other practical opticians, with this difference, however, that the alloy he calls, for want of a better name, '*white brass*,' must have been extremely malleable, and very easy of being melted and worked, and afterwards ornamented with hammers and dies, &c.—a perfectly tractable metal, and not the almost incorrigible material which the speculum metal now in use really is.

"Hitherto, no actual analysis, that I know of, has been made of any fragment of this metal, which *actually* composes one or more of these brooches; but Mr. J. W. Mallet analyzed a portion of a fragment of a peculiarly and elegantly formed chisel-shaped article, apparently composed of the same alloy, found, as described in Mr. Wilde's '*Catalogue*,' p. 158, in the townland of Ballyvadden, parish of Kilmukridge, in the lower part of an old earthen vessel, *along* with fragments of common pocket celts, a gouge, a few rings, and other fragments, all made of the *antique yellow bronze*, in a state of great corrosion. This article Mr. Mallet describes ('Trans. R. I. A.', Science, vol. xxii., p. 333), as 'a bit of white metal of considerable lustre, and exhibiting a somewhat lamellar structure. This latter was hard and very brittle, so as to be easily reduced to powder in a mortar. There were no traces of corrosion on the surface. Specific gravity, 8·107. On analysis, it gave in 100 parts:—

Copper, . . . . .	66·12
Tin, . . . . .	30·62
Silver, . . . . .	0·13
Antimony, . . . . .	1·91
Sulphur, . . . . .	0·11
<hr/>	
	98·89

He then proceeds to say:—'Thus, though an alloy of copper and tin, it differs totally from bronze in the proportion of its ingredients. The only analysis I [Mr. Mallet] have seen which comes near this, is that of an antique Roman mirror by Klapproth.'

"Mr. Mallet then argues:—'Whether the Irish alloy was intentionally

made to be used [*originally*] for a similar purpose [*a speculum*]—a supposition in some degree countenanced by the presence of a little antimony—is not easy to decide.' How he could put this question to himself, I cannot imagine, unless he suspected that the article in question had been made out of the mirror or *speculum* metal of antiquity, a case which the fact of the peculiar and elegant form of the thing itself, and its accessories, did not indicate.

"Had a fragment of an ancient mirror, or even a perfect specimen of one, composed of the same alloy, been found with or near the old broken pot and its contents, or had mirrors, or their fragments, made of the same alloy, been found frequently in Ireland, the consideration of his problematical case would have been reasonable, that this little article had been made, by accident or design, of a portion of the alloy used specifically for mirrors by the ancients. Whether it was, or was not, is nothing to us. His statement, however, implies that the alloy composing it, if used for mirrors, may have been the most lustrous combination of the metals known, and of all others, probably, the best calculated to maintain its polish, as many of the brooches have done, against the united influences of oxidation and attrition, like the fragment in the collection of bronzes; and it is likely that a composition or alloy, having such excellent qualities, would have been preferred as much for brooches and other ornamental purposes, as for mirrors, the looking-glasses of antiquity. Indeed, it looks as if the recovery of the composition of these ancient brooches would be a great desideratum in the arts in our own time, and much superior to aluminum, for it appears to possess several qualities which would give it a preference to that metal, and silver also, and all the modern substitutions and representations of it that I know of. The bronze things found with the fragment of metal analyzed by Mr. Mallet, in some degree may be taken as indicating an equivalent antiquity for it.

"I say, under correction, '*in some degree*,' for it is quite possible that the collection of things found in the pot with it may have belonged to a different age; and even the remains of the pot may have been comparatively modern; and the things, one and all, in it, antiquated and out of use, when condemned as scrap metal to be melted down, like too many lots of curious and valuable antiquities, by our own country smiths, in our own times, so that we may guess or hope almost anything as to the relative or actual dates of the real bronzes, the white metal fragment, and the old pot itself.

"If we fix the date of the old earthen pot itself, it would help greatly in giving an approximate date to the things in it; but here we are at fault, as hitherto nothing of the kind, that I know of, has been preserved. It is not like any of the typical forms of the ancient cinerary urns, and we have none other in this Museum; it looks more like the remains of an earthen vessel, which might have been used for some domestic purpose—a milk-pan, for example. In this respect it has a modern character about it, which may, however, be perfectly accidental, for many specimens of ancient domestic pottery found abroad have all the characters of modern manufacture, yet they are genuine antiquities. Indeed, if this piece of the old earthen pot were intended for domestic uses, it is as rare a specimen in Ireland, as the little fragment of white metal found in it, for I know

of nothing of the kind elsewhere, though I have often heard of Roman, Saxon, and Danish coins found in Ireland, in perfect or broken earthen vessels, not cinerary urns. Unfortunately, none of these have been preserved, so that we might compare them with this remnant of antiquity.

" We want more facts to bear us out in an approximate date for the scrap of white metal; *and in its original shape*, it is decidedly *different* to every metallic article that I have seen in the Academy's or any other collection of antiques. I feel satisfied that we must reject Mr. Mallet's inference as to its having been made, either of fragments of mirror metal, as such, or as a failure in point of composition, any more than it was a failure in its shape, which was beautifully symmetrical, and its core or hollow for a handle was formed with such art that it was a masterpiece of casting, and in its way as exquisite in point of finish and form as any brooch made of what appears to our eyes to have been the *same* material. The hands and art which made the brooches of the white brass might have made the little chisel, and conversely it is probable that those who did make it might have formed the others also. The substance of this little fragment is so hard that a steel penknife will just scratch it, and when first found, many intelligent people who saw it thought it might be a specimen of that kind of bronze which the ancients are thought to have made so hard, somehow, by composition, or by tempering, that it would cut stone, wood, &c., as well, or perhaps better, than modern steel.

" Whether the composition of this scrap of old metal may be taken to verify the old opinion, that such brass or bronze actually existed, I will not undertake to say, for it appears to me that, though the surface is but little tarnished, the process of oxidation of some one or other of its ingredients has been, in the course of time, completed all through its substance, for the colour of the fracture is not nearly so metallic as that of the surface. Its original temper may be entirely changed by time, so that its present brittleness is not evidence of its original unfitness for those purposes to which the bronze of antiquity was occasionally applicable.

" In its present fracture it resembles some ancient bronze articles, which superficially appear to be perfectly metallic, but, breaking readily, they exhibit internal molecular oxidation, which entirely changes their original ductility, &c., and so I would infer that the excessive friability of the metal in the white fragment was in a degree owing to a sort of internal oxidation, which had gone on probably for many hundred years. In the case of a brooch in the Museum composed superficially, apparently, of the same metal, the surface is very hard, like the fragment analyzed, but it is at the same time so elastic, where the surface covering parts from its leaden foundation, that it springs more like a plate of thin steel than if it were made of well-hammered common brass, so much used for watch-making, &c., and hence I think we may infer that originally this white alloy was not so brittle as it appears to be in the piece examined by Mr. Mallet.

" In relation to the view here taken of the similitude in composition of these brooches and the white metal fragment, it is much to be desired that we could have an actual analysis made of one of them, and that we might be permitted to compare that with an analysis of the speculum or metallic mirror found covering a beautiful glass urn, discovered on the

property of Mr. Perry, situated, I believe, within the limits of the county of Kilkenny. If this were found to agree, we should give Mr. Mallet great credit for his inference.

“This mirror is, beyond doubt, of the Roman period in Great Britain, and may indicate *one* date in Ireland for the use of a mirror alloy, probably equivalent to that composing the little implement we have been talking about. This would bring its date up to the times of Virgil and Pliny, and raise a chance that it might be a specimen of that composition known to the Latins as ‘*orichalcum album*,’ and to the Greeks as *λευκον κραμα*, or white bronze. I do not think we can stop here, for the designs on those brooches under consideration are neither Latin nor Greek of the classic period, and hence it might be said, this composition was not known to either, unless we can produce some Latin or Greek antiquities made of it. This we cannot do, but as the designs of some of the brooches are probably of late Jewish and early Christian art, we may, perhaps, claim for it a Jewish association, and liken it to, or identify it, with the ‘copper,’ so called, used by the Jews for mirrors, and also with the material of the ‘two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold,’ mentioned in Ezra, viii. 27, —for this material appears, from the way it is economized in the brooches, by means of internal leaden cones introduced with great skill, to have been as precious as, or even more precious than, gold. Indeed, the care that was taken to economize this material, as well as the extra work put upon it to increase its beauty, indicates that it was the pet metal or material of the jewellers of antiquity, or at least that period of the good old times to which those brooches, at any rate, belonged.

“In India and China I understand that a substance, called white brass by Europeans, is still in use, but whether ornamental things like our Irish brooches are made of it, in preference to silver, I am not at this moment able to say. It is quite clear that the metal composing the surface of this Kilkenny brooch was preferred, when and where it was made, to silver, and, I suspect, to gold itself; placing its material, probably, before either metal, and on a par, perhaps, with the old Corinthian brass, which was at one time the most valuable metallic compound known to the ancients. The composition of that alloy has been lost to the arts for a long time, and may we not hope that if these things are made either of white brass, Corinthian brass, or its equivalent, that their composition may be recovered, and the arts of our time benefited accordingly?

“In the absence of any exact or direct evidence as to this pin being really made of the white brass, &c., of the ancients, we may, I think, adopt the designation ‘white bronze’ for the material of that and other brooches like it, until some further evidence is produced to prove the name misapplied,<sup>1</sup> though Mr. Mallet’s remarks would, at least in the case of the fragment of the little implement, remove them, if they are the same with it, from the category of *bronzes* altogether.

“I have to apologize for the hurried character of this communication. If it have the effect of drawing the attention of our chemists and manufac-

<sup>1</sup> “We have got an Irish name, which we may, at least till we get better, give to the material of which it is composed. I have just found it in the ‘*Atlantis*,’ No. III., p. 113, where Mr. Curry in a note suggests that the

metal *Findruine*, of which the rim of Cuchulainn’s shield was made, might ‘have been a species of white bronze,’ just the sort of thing I believe this and other brooches to have been composed of.”

turing jewellers to the composition of these brooches, and its re-discovery, it may prove a further benefit to our native artisans, who, I rejoice to say, have already reaped a good harvest by the revival of the patterns of the antique brooches, which, it is hoped, may be much improved upon, when we are enabled to make them of their original material, now imitated imperfectly in silver.

“ Most truly yours,  
“ E. CLIBBORN.”

The Hon. Secretary stated that, with reference to the signet rings with the device of a crowned W, lately found in the county of Wexford (see p. 95, *supra*), he had received the following note from Albert Way, Esq., whose opinion on this and kindred subjects was of the highest authority :—

“ Crowned letters are, I believe, mere devices. From 1380 or so, for 80 or 100 years, anybody or everybody put a crown on his initial, however ignoble he was. This is abundantly proved by seals of men of no note, on deeds. I have several alphabets of impressions of crowned initials from deeds, &c., and several crowned W's, being my own initial. Such may have been assigned to the Conqueror, to William Rufus, and others, but I believe my story is the true one. I will seal with the best I know—found in Scotland—and possibly a relic of a person of some better note, but the common seal rings of this class were certainly only caprices, as regarded the crown.”

An impression of a crowned W, from a large ring in his possession, was also sent by E. Pretty, Esq., Chillington House, Maidstone, Kent.

A communication from James Carruthers, Esq., was read as follows :—

“ A few months ago a very curious antique Greek finger ring of fine gold was discovered near Lisburn, county of Antrim, and is now in my possession. It is composed of seven circular pieces, each a quarter of an inch in diameter, joined by small knobs. On the circular pieces are represented, in relief, a lyre—Venus rising out of the sea—a trident—head of Ulysses—a tripod—a sixteen-cared galley—and a seated figure such as is found on many ancient coins; on six of them are Greek characters, an explanation of which I subjoin :—

1. KYΘ, (ΚΥΘΕΡΑ) CYTHERA.	4. ΑΥΛ, (ΑΥΛΙΣ) AULIS.
2. ΠΑ, (ΠΑΡΟΣ) PAROS.	5. Obliterated.
3. ΙΘΑ, (ΙΘΑΚΗ) ITHACA.	6. ΧΙΟ, (ΧΙΟΣ) CHIOS.

The following annotated transcript<sup>1</sup> from the original letter in his possession was forwarded by George Bish Webb, Esq. :—

<sup>1</sup> The writer of the letter of which the transcript is annexed was Robert Fitzgerald, second son of George, sixteenth Earl of Kildare, by his marriage with Lady Jane Boyle, daughter of the first Earl of Cork. The following is from Burke's “Peerage:”—“This

gentleman having taken an active part in effecting the Restoration, was appointed by Charles the Second Comptroller of the musters and cheques of the army, in 1661, with the fee of 21s. per day, and was sworn at the same time of the Privy Council. He

*Letter of COLONEL ROBERT FITZGERALD.*

9, December, Dublin.

“SIR—My Lord Chancellor Porter<sup>2</sup> had been ill of a Cholicke or paine in his stomach aboute 3 weekes, most of which he went abroad. Yesterday sate in his court for 5 houres despatching causes till he was told there were no more on the list, upon wh<sup>h</sup> he went home, dined, and was very merry and well, entertaining all the company wh<sup>h</sup> came, and despatching papers till 4 o’clocke, when he went to his chamber to write letters for England—the very moment after he began to write he was taken ill and rung a bell twice to call his servants to him, but before any could come in less than a minutes time he was found dead, leaning backe in his chaire, and tho’ an excellent surgeon was in the House, and all y<sup>e</sup> proper remedys used, he made not one signe of life, and has dyed I feare in a very ill time, considering how sickly my Lord Drogheda<sup>3</sup> is & we doubt not all arts and endeavors will be used to get Woosley [?] into his place of Justice, and if that should happen this Kingdom will be totally ruined, and he would be followed by a traine of clamours and impeachments from hence wh<sup>h</sup> will be most uneasy to the King’s affaires both in England and Ireland. I hope you who love the King and us will be active to get us an acceptable person. My Lord Meath<sup>4</sup> who came with me fell ill as it is generally sayd of an apoplektike fitt, at the same time I pretend not to anything knowing it is in vaine tho’ I have had lately fayre assurances from Lord Coningsby<sup>5</sup> and y<sup>r</sup> interest, that if you would step to my Lord President he would advise you if it were possible to do me a service. It has been observed by many, that ever since Mr. Deane and one Major Deane went hence, who some say carried articles against his L<sup>P</sup>, he has been very melancholy, and within this month he has told me 3 or 4 times that he was very unhappy that he could do nothing to give this country satisfaction, and used some such melancholy expressions as made me say I was

was subsequently appointed Governor and Custos Rotulorum of the county of Kildare, in which shire he resided at Grangemellan. Upon the accession of King James, however, he was stripped of all his employments and estate, to the value of £3300 per annum, and imprisoned in Newgate for twenty-one weeks, but afterwards, in consequence of the state of his health, removed to his own house, where he remained guarded for five months. On the landing of William in Ireland, Captain Fitzgerald was placed in close durance within the College of Dublin, and so restrained until the defeat of James, at the Boyne, when he broke from his prison, and by his courage and prudence preserved Dublin from being sacked. When William entered the metropolis, Captain Fitzgerald had the honour of presenting to his Majesty the keys of the city. He was afterwards sworn of the Privy Council. He married Mary, daughter and heiress of James Clotworthy, Esq., of Monnimore, county of Londonderry,

and had, with several daughters, a son Robert, who succeeded as nineteenth Earl of Kildare, and was an eminent statesman in the reigns of Queen Anne, George I., and George II. His only son was created, 26th November, 1766, Duke of Leinster.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Charles Porter was appointed Lord Chancellor Jan. 9, 1686 (reign of James II.), and held the office one year. He was again appointed December 29, 1690. His successor was John Methuen, Esq., appointed March 11, 1697.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Hamilton, third Earl of Drogheda, whose son John married subsequently Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Sir Charles Porter.

<sup>4</sup> Edward, fourth Earl of Meath, who died in 1704. He commanded a regiment at the Boyne, and was a Ranger of the Phoenix Park, Dublin, and one of the Keepers of the Great Seal in 1697.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Lord Coningsby was Vice-Treasurer of Ireland in 1693 and in 1698.

afrayde he was worse than he appeared, of w<sup>h</sup> many mind me now and say I have an unlucky guesse.

“ If my Lord Meath dyes I should thinke it not impossible to come into his place & he y<sup>t</sup> can gett nothing for actings and sufferings would be glad to be ye [*illegible*] in a hospitall. I know not how my Lord President stands, but I am sure if he could do it he would willingly, and if you would make a visit to him on my account it would never be forgotten by yours R. F.”

Endorsed :—“ 9, Dec<sup>r</sup>, 1696, Dublin,  
from Col. Ffitz Gerald, R' [Received] 23.”

Mr. W. J. O'Donovan sent the following communication :—

“ In the summer of 1848, George Woods, of Milverton House, county of Dublin, Esq., began to drain a swamp in his demesne, through which ran a water-course, which was usually dry at that season, the whole breadth being about half an acre; when the turfy loam which formed the surface was removed, it was found to be intersected at right angles to the course of the stream by several dams of yellow clay, which must have been brought from a distance, and which rested on the natural subsoil, a strong lime-stone gravel. On this subsoil was found a water-mill made of oak, the ends of the shaft of which were perfectly round and smooth, as if turned in a lathe, evidently showing that it had lost nothing of its original length, about four feet, or rather more. Into this shaft were morticed eight large wooden spoons, each about 2 feet by 14 inches, scooped out of a solid piece of oak rounded at the end, and capable of containing about a quart of water; the handles or parts let into the shaft were perfectly square. With the mill were found two small grindstones, one 8, the other 5 inches in diameter, of the fine sandstone of the neighbourhood, called ‘kent-stone,’ and still used for scythe-stones. Resting on the subsoil, and not intermixed with the loam, were found large heaps of bones, boars’ teeth, skulls of the *Bos longifrons*; and, covering the top of a kistvaen in a Pagan cemetery hard by, and adjoining the church (in ruins), grave-yard, and well of St. Mavee, were found, by the same gentleman, in 1851, two millstones, one broken, the other tolerably perfect; the broken one measured about 3 feet 6 inches across, the other about 2 feet 8 inches. The water-wheel, &c., of the mill, have unfortunately not been preserved; the stones, four in number, some skulls, and seven teeth, were, in 1852, given to me by Mr. Woods, and by me presented, in his name, to the Royal Irish Academy, where, I suppose, they are still in the Museum.

“ I wish to draw attention to the fact of the discovery of a *water-wheel*, to the dams, the grindstones, and, above all, to the extraordinary place where the millstones were found, forming part of the covering of a Pagan grave. I offer no observations, leaving them for better antiquaries than I can boast to be; but I hope such a unique discovery may elicit curious deductions as to the probable date of the mill.

“ My authority for the facts are conversations with, and letters from, Mr. Woods, on whose land the remains were found.”

The following papers were then submitted to the Meeting :—